QUESTION AND ANSWER DEPARTMENT

Q. What is a good potting soil for hibiscus?
A. Hibiscus are partial to a light type of potting soil with a large percentage of organic material. A suggested formula that may be varied according to the availability of materials is as follows: One-half good top soil, one-quarter imported peat and/or pulverized manure. One-quarter coarse sharp sand. One pint of 6-6-6 commercial fertilizer should be added to about each 15 gallons and the mix allowed to stand for at least ten days before using. Where true Everglades muck is obtainable, the addition of some sharp sand and the above amount of commercial fertilizer is satisfactory. In any case, regular feedings of a complete soluble plant food at weekly intervals will help. The soil should hold water but never be saturated. It should never cake or pack tightly.

Q. What is meant by the word "sport" that I see used in describing varieties?
A. The word "sport" is used to denote a variant from any established variety. The exact cause is not known but is apparently caused by some change in the cells of the growth bud itself. Some sports are distinctive enough in growth habits, foliage type and varigation, blossom form or color to form a new and valuable variety. Sports will propogate true to the variation.

Q. Can I grow hibiscus by the "soil-less" or hydroponic method?
A. We see no reason why not, but also see no reason why it should be any advantage over a plant well potted in soil.

Q. Of what value is a spray nutrient to a hibiscus plant?
A. It has been found and proven that a hibiscus plant absorbs moisture through leaves. Therefore, when the leaves are sprayed with a good nutritional spray the leaf will absorb this nutrient and cause the leaves to become a rich dark green. This also goes a little further into the plant but not necessarily

down to the roots. When you work two ends toward the middle you get there a little faster. When spraying the leaves, be sure to feed the roots at the same time. Make sure also the leaves are covered on the underneath side as well as the top.

Q. What are some of the causes of bud drop?
A. There are numerous causes of bud drop. Plants that are unhealthy because of insect or nematode attack or a deficiency of one or more of the plant food elements may drop buds prematurely. Injury to the unopened flower buds by aphids and thrips can cause bud drop. Poor drainage or excessive drought can also cause plants to drop flower buds. The shock of transplanting may cause many plants to drop buds. Flower bud drop appears to be a decided varietal characteristic; that is, some varieties under the same growing conditions will drop or fail to open buds while other varieties growing nearby consistently open their flowers.

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

This question was asked the editor recently by a very interested but not familiar hibiscus lover. Quote. "Tell me, do you make a graft on to a cutting or on to rooted plant?" Unquote. This certainly proves the point that the field is wide open to spread the knowledge of hibiscus even to non-members of the A.H.S. Be patient and be glad to help those who are in need of help.

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TOPICS OF INTEREST

A.H.S. will be represented at the International Horticultural Congress at Nice, France, April 11-18. Mr. Ross Gast, our Director from California, will be in Europe at that time in a business capacity and has volunteered to serve as our Ambassador of Good Will.